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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/777,457	02/12/2004	Marco Pasotti	S1022.81104US00	2275

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EXAMINER

PHAN, TRONG Q

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2827

DATE MAILED: 07/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/777,457	PASOTTI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	TRONG PHAN	2827	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 11-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the feature as recited in claim 10 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 20, 23 and 26-27 are objected to because of the following informalities:

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Claims 20 and 26, "a comparator" is claimed twice.

Claims 23 and 27, "a first feedback amplifier" is claimed twice.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-9 and 11-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pollachek, 4,648,074, in view of Lee et al., 5,909,405, Garni et al., 6,621,729, and Passotti et al., 6,535,428.

Pollachek, 4,648,074, discloses in Fig. 3 a NAND-stack of read only memory (ROM) device (see lines 24-27, column 1) comprising:

Regarding claims 1, 4-6, 9, 11-13, 19-22, 26 and 30-32:

memory cell array 30;

reference memory cell array 31;

differential amplifier 22 which reads on the output comparator as recited in claims 1, 11 and 26;

first load PMOS transistor PTR for connection between supply terminal VDD and an input terminal of differential amplifier 22 and being connected to reference cell array 31;

second load PMOS transistor PT1;

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a control circuit (not shown) for providing the precharge pulse PC to the control gate electrodes of both first and second load PMOS transistors PT1 and PTR for supplying respective load currents IR and IS during the period of time in which the first and second load PMOS transistors PT1 and PTR being momentarily turned ON by the precharge pulse PC;

a plurality of sense amplifiers, as shown in Fig. 5, which read on the read/write circuit as recited in claim 12; wherein:

the operating power supply voltage VDD, for example, 5 volts (see lines 60-61, column 3), which is for example, therefore, it can be low less than 1.5 volts as recited in claims 30-31 depending the design operating parameters for the device as well as the size of the PMOS load transistors as well known in the art; or when depletion PMOS transistor being used, the low power supply voltage VDD of less than 1.5 volts as recited in claims 30-31 will be applied since the threshold voltage of depletion PMOS transistors being of -6 volts for logic "1" and -3 volts for logic "0" (see lines 38-63, column 9); NMOS transistors could also be used instead of PMOS transistors with appropriate care for the polarity of operating potential (see lines 64-68, column 9).

Regarding claims 1, 4-6, 9, 11-13, 19-22, 26 and 30-32:

What is not shown in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, is the nonvolatile memory cell as recited in claims 1, 4-6, 9, 11-13, 19-22, 26 and 30-32.

Lee et al., 5,909,405, discloses the teaching that NAND-type read only memory is referred to as nonvolatile memory (see lines 11-14, column 1).

In view of Lee et al., 5,909,405, the NAND-stack of read only memory (ROM)

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device in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, is obviously a nonvolatile memory device.

Regarding claims 2-3, 7, 14-18 and 23-27:

What is not shown in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648, 074, which is modified by Lee et al., 5,908,405, is the feedback amplifier as recited in claims 2-3, 7, 14-18 and 23-27.

Garni et al., 6,621,729, discloses in Fig. 1 the teaching of using feedback operational amplifier 12 having a first input connected to the drain of PMOS load transistor 14 and a second input connected to a reference voltage VREF which can be a bandgap voltage as well known in the art .

It would have been obvious under 35 USC 103(a) to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention was made to utilize the feedback operational amplifier 12 in Fig. 1 of Garni et al., 6,621,729, for the control circuit providing the precharge pulse PC to the control gates of both load PMOS transistors PT and PTR in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, which is modified by Lee et al., 5,908,405, for providing the control bias voltage independent of an operating voltage between source and drain terminals of each of load PMOS transistors PT and PTR in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, which is modified by Lee et al., 5,908,405, (see lines 20-22, column 2 of Garni et al., 6,621,729).

One of ordinary skill in the art also would have known to utilize two feedback operational amplifiers 12 in Fig. 1 of Garni et al., 6,621,729, for provide the bias voltage

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separately to each of control gates of load PMOS transistors PT and PTR in Figs 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, as recited in claim 23.

Regarding claims 8 and 29:

What is not shown in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, which is modified by Lee et al., 5,908,405, and Garni et al., 6,621,729, is the first and second voltage limiters as recited in claim 8 which either limiter comprising a third transistor having an inverter coupled to a gate and a conducting terminal as recited in claim 29.

Pasotti et al., 6,535,428, discloses in Fig. 1 the teaching of using NMOS transistors MN1 connecting load MP1 and memory cells MC and NMOS transistor MN2 connecting between load transistor MP2 and reference memory cells CR. Also, as shown in Fig. 2, each of NMOS transistors MN1 and MN2 is controlled by a feedback inverter INV1 (it should be noted that Fig. 2 does show only circuit branch 11 (see lines 59-65, column 8)).

It would have been obvious under 35 USC 103(a) to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention was made to utilize a first set of NMOS transistor MN1 and inverter INV for connecting between PMOS load transistor PT and memory cells 30 and a second set of NMOS transistor MN1 and inverter INV for connecting between PMOS load transistor PTR and reference memory cells 31 in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek, 4,648,074, which is modified by Lee et al., 5,908,405, and Garni et al., 6,621,729, for the purpose of keeping the drain voltage of the memory cells 30 as well as the drain voltage of the reference memory cells 31 in Figs. 3 and 5 of Pollachek,

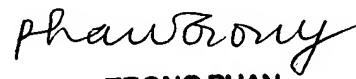
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4,648,074, as a predetermined value (see lines 10-24, column 5 of Pasotti et al., 6,535,428) such as the first and second voltage limiters as recited in claims 8 and 29.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to TRONG PHAN whose telephone number is (571) 272-1794. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, AMIR ZARABIAN can be reached on (571)272-1852. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


TRONG PHAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER